

Message Text

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S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 362

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SS, MR, MO, AG
SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: DOES US ACCEPT MAURITANIAN/MOROCCAN
PARTITION-ANNEXATION? REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS

REF: (A) JULY 1975 OFFICIAL-INFORMAL LETTER TO AF/W, (B)
75 NOUAKCHOTT 2498, (C) 76 STATE 52179, (D) 76 NOUAKCHOTT 558
(E) 76 PARIS 8158, (F) 3 FEB 77 LETTER FROM AF/W KILLION

1. DOES USG APPROVE AND ACCEPT MAURITANIAN/MOROCCAN PARTITION
OF FORMER SPANISH SAHARA? DOES USG RECOGNIZE INCORPORATION OF
SOUTHERN THIRD OF SPANISH SAHARA INTO ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURI-
TANIA (AND NORTHERN TWO-THIRDS INTO MOROCCO)? ON EVE OF NATIF-
WIDE CELEBRATIONS BEING PLANNED BY GIRM FOR FEBRUARY 26 TO MARK
FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF REUNIFICATION OF TIRIS AL-GHARBIA (SOUTHERN
HALF OF SPANISH RIO DE ORO) WITH 1960 MAURITANIA, THE ABOVE ACA-
DEMIC, POLITICAL SCIENCE/INTERNATIONAL LEGAL QUESTIONS BECOME
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PRESSING OPERATIONAL ISSUES. DOES US AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA
PARTICIPATE IN LARGE-SCALE REUNIFICATION CELEBRATIONS BEING
PLANNED? DOES HE BECOME DIPLOMATICALLY ILL OR ABSENT HIMSELF
FROM POST? DOES HE SIMPLY DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE AND
EXPLAIN WHY IF ASKED LATER (AS HE ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL
BE)? OR DOES HE INFORM GIRM QUIETLY IN ADVANCE THAT HE
CANNOT PARTICIPATE TOGETHER WITH REASONS THEREFORE?

2. UNTIL DAY OR TWO AGO, US STANCE ON SAHARA PARTITION AND HENCE PROPER COURSE OF ACTION IN RE UPCOMING REUNIFICATION CELEBRATIONS SEEMED CLEAR. DEPARTMENT'S VIGOROUS VETO OF DCM AND MILATT VISIT TO DAKHLA FOR INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION PURPOSES (REF C) MADE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT USG DID NOT RPT NOT ACCEPT SAHARA PARTITION AT LEAST AS OF ELEVEN MONTHS AGO AND THAT US REPS WERE NOT TO SUGGEST TO CONTRARY IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER. I THEREFORE PLANNED TO DECLINE TO ATTEND ANY FORMAL CELEBRATION OF MAURITANIAN ANNEXATION OF EX-SAHARA, AND EXPLAIN LATER WHEN ASKED THAT USG DOES NOT CONSIDER SAHARA DECOLONIZATION PROCESS TO BE COMVBDE, DESPITE GIRM AND GOM ASSERTIONS TO CONTRARY, NOR FORMALLY RECOGNIZE MAUTANIAN/MOROCCAN PARTITION AND ANNEXATION. JUDGING FROM PREVIOUS EXCHANGES WITH PARIS, I WOULD EXPECT FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO FOLLOW SUIT (REF E). AM PLANNING TO INQUIRE DISCRETELY IN NEXT 36 HOURS.

3. BUT WEEKEND POUCH BROUGHT COPY OF UNDATED SPANISH SAHARA TRANSITION PAPER DRAFTED BY NEA AND CLEARED BY AF WHICH STATES: WHILE "US HAS AVOIDED TAKING ANY MEASURE WHICH WOULD OVERTLY OR IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZE SOVEREIGNTH OF MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA OVER TERRITORY" ..., "...WE HAVE PRIVATELY MADE IT CLEAR TO KING HASSAN AND HIS REPRESENTATIVES THAT WE WOULD FAVOUR SUCCESS OF MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN POLICY IN SAHARA.."

4. WHILE I AM CHAGRINED (BUT NOT TERRIBLY SURPRISED) TO
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LEARN THAT MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR WAS RIGHT WHEN HE TOLD ME FLATLY THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT USG POLICY ON SAHARA WAS, THAT US STANCE WAS NOT THE STRICT NEUTRALITY IN SAHARA AFFAIR I HAD BEEN INSISTING ON (REFS A AND D) AND WHILE DISAPPOINTED THAT I WAS NOT GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO USE USG POLICY SHIFT TO EXTRACT SOME SPECIFIC QUID FROM GIRM FOR US SAHARA QUO (REF B), US POLICY ON SAHARA IS NOW CLEAR TO US MISSION IN MAURITANIA. THUS UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED BY 1600 GMT FEBRUARY 25, I PLAN TO INFORM MOST SENIOR GIRM FOREIGN MINISTRY AND PRESIDENCY OFFICIALS AVAILABLE THAT (A) I CANNOT PARTICIPATE PUBLICLY IN ANY REUNIFICATION CEREMONIES ON TWENTY-SIXTH, BUT (B) USG NONETHELESS SUPPORTS MAURITANIAN/MOROCCAN PARTITION AND ANNEXATION OF SPANISH SAHARA. IN VIEW (A) DECLARATIONS US OFFICIALS HAVE MADE TOMORROCANS (PER TRANSITION PAPER). AND (B) CONTINUOUS, FULL AND PROMPT EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED GIRM/GOM RELATIONSHIP SINCE LATE 1975, ANY OTHER COURSE WILL BE AT ONCE MISUNDERSTOOD BY GIRM AND MISINTERPRETED AS US DECISION TO BACK AWAY FROM

PREVIOUS PUBLIC (UNGA) AND PRIVATE SUPPORT OF MAURITANIAN/
MOROCCAN SAHARA POLICY.

HANDYSIDE

UNQUOTE VANCE

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